



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Airman Missing From WWII Accounted For

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, lost during World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Verne L. Gibb, 22, of Topeka, Kan., will be buried April 23, in Leavenworth, Kan. On Oct. 23, 1945, Gibb was the pilot of a C-47B Skytrain aircraft, with three other crew members and two passengers, which departed Myitkyina, Burma en route to Chabua, India on a routine cargo flight. The weather along the route was unfavorable and the aircraft was never seen again.

More than 60 aerial search missions were flown to recover the crew and passengers, but the crash site was never located. All six men aboard the aircraft were declared dead.

In May 2002, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) received human remains that had been turned over to the U.S. Defense Attaché in Rangoon, Burma. A Burmese national reportedly found the remains 30 years earlier and gave them to a local priest, who in 2002 gave the remains to an American school teacher working in the area.

To identify Gibb's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as mitochondrial DNA, which matched Gibb's sister.

Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, more than 400,000 died. There are more than 73,000 servicemen whose remains were never recovered.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

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